

HB 1463
Testimony in Opposition.

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee.

My name is Andrew Bornemann, I am a farmer and small business owner from Kintyre, ND. I stand opposed to HB1463 as submitted, thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts with this committee. For reference, I served as chair of the District 28 Republican party for 5 years prior to the most recent redistricting, and am currently active in District 8 and the ND State Republican party as well. I am however testifying on behalf of myself and not in any official capacity today.

Subsection 1 of this bill (lines 9-14) would require all district political party meetings to be held "within the geographical boundaries of the district organization's legislative district". This is simply not feasible in many cases, and unnecessarily burdensome in many others. Smaller, heavily populated districts in downtown Bismarck, Minot, Fargo and Grand Forks may not have access to a suitably large enough facility within their district boundaries to hold their larger conventions, and many districts in more heavily populated areas are in the habit of having joint conventions with other districts, most notably in Fargo, where they are then able to share the costs of a larger venue, and increase their draw to both speakers and members. This bill would effectively end this practice.

Subsection 2 of this bill (lines 15-18) would place further restrictions on the locations of district meetings, particularly in districts bordering a large city. As submitted, this bill would further require the district meetings be held within that portion of the district which lies within the geographical boundaries of the city, even if a very small portion of the district lies within city limits. This language is problematic for a couple of reasons, the first of which is the same as above: there simply are not venues large enough for some of these meetings within the small area that is in city limits in several mostly rural districts. Second, if a district contains portions of several incorporated cities, which city would the district be required to hold their meetings in?

I do however sympathize with the goal of requiring District meetings to be held within a reasonable distance of the district, as a protection for the district membership, and it is my opinion that the above issues could be alleviated by including alternative language, and recommend one of the following methods:

1. Require the district meetings to be held within the boundaries of the district, OR within a certain radius of the center of the district. A 25 mile radius would allow ample leeway for smaller districts in a city to have their meetings within or at venues near the city, and still allow a district on the edge of Fargo to participate in the joint Fargo conventions.
2. Require the district meetings to be held within the boundaries of the district, OR within a certain distance from any edge of the district. A 5 mile limit from any edge of a district would also accomplish the same as above.
3. Make subsection 2 of this bill an exception to the requirement of subsection 1, and make it optional. This way, a district which encompasses a small portion of a larger city would have the option to have their meetings at any location within the city limits, even if that location is outside of their legislative district boundaries.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns on this bill, and I would stand for any questions from the committee.